

# Making the Most of Mealtime

Children who eat regularly with their families tend to eat healthier. Their diets contain more fruits and vegetables and less fried foods, soda and fat.

Parents can set a positive example for children at mealtime by using and teaching appropriate table manners. Eating together is nutritionally important but can also help your children develop social skills. For example, when each family member takes a turn to speak and listen, it reinforces the importance of polite conversation.

## HOW TO CREATE A POSITIVE MEALTIME ATMOSHPERE

- ✓ Turn off the television!
- ✓ Let the answering machine pick up calls.
- ✓ Discuss **positive** events of the day.
- ✓ Remember, kids often take more time to eat than adults do. Take your time through the meal.
- ✓ Offer a variety of foods from all the food groups. Don't label foods as good or bad.



## INVOLVE THE CHILDREN

- ✓ Encourage children to wash hands before helping in the kitchen.
- ✓ Ask children to set and clear the table.
- ✓ Children can help with measuring and mixing ingredients.
- ✓ Children can tear lettuce, peel oranges, clean grapes, etc.
- ✓ Encourage children to choose recipes they would like to try.
- ✓ Involve older children when creating your grocery list or with shopping.

